

## Message Text

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ACTION EA-12

INFO OCT-01 ISO-00 CIAE-00 DODE-00 PM-05 H-01 INR-10  
L-03 NSAE-00 NSC-05 PA-01 SP-02 SS-15 ICA-11  
OMB-01 HA-05 /072 W  
-----007504 030356Z /20

R 030240Z JUL 78  
FM AMEMBASSY SINGAPORE  
TO SECSTATE WASHDC 0611  
INFO AMEMBASSY BANGKOK  
AMEMBASSY JAKARTA  
AMEMBASSY KUALA LUMPUR  
AMEMBASSY MANILA

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E.O. 11652: N/A  
TAGS: PINT, SN  
SUBJECT: FORTHCOMING SINGAPORE BY-ELECTION

REF: SINGAPORE 2576

1. SPECULATION ON BY-ELECTION CONTINUES IN PRESS AND POLITICAL CIRCLES. ALTHOUGH PARLIAMENT NOT PROLOGUED AFTER JUNE 14 SESSION, BY-ELECTION BEFORE END OF JULY THOUGHT LIKELY.

2. ALTHOUGH ONLY ONE VACANT SEAT FIRM, SPECULATION CONTINUES THAT ADDITIONAL THREE OR FOUR MPS MAY RESIGN. MOST LIKELY RETIREE NOW THOUGHT TO BE YONG NYUK LIN, BROTHER-IN-LAW OF PM, CABINET MINISTER FROM 1959 TO 1975, THEN HIGH COMMISSIONER TO UK FOR ONE YEAR. RUMORS PERSIST THAT ANG KOK PENG WANTS TO RETIRE. PRESS SPECULATION ON RESIGNATIONS MENTIONS AHMAD HALEEM (TELOK BLANGAH), FORMER AIR FORCE OFFICER WITH REPUTATION AS NO-SHOW MP. NEW NATION AND SIN CHEW JIT POH NAMED HO SEE BENG, LONG TIME NTUC LEADER AND MP SINCE 1963, BUT HO QUOTED IN NANYANG SIANG PAU AS NOT INTENDING QUIT POLITICS.

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3. NO OPEN SPECULATION ON POSSIBLE REPLACEMENTS, THOUGH LABOR LEADER ORIGINALLY CONSIDERED A LIKELY CANDIDATE, V. JAYAKODY, TOLD EMBOFFS LAST WEEK HE NOT INTERESTED. HOWEVER, HE HAS BEEN ACTIVELY VISITING PAP BRANCH OFFICES IN RECENT WEEKS. SPECULATION ON POSSIBLE CIVIL SERVANT CANDIDATES NOW INCLUDES ONG WEE HOCK, DIVISIONAL DIRECTOR FOR MANPOWER,

EDB AND MEMBER SEVERAL STATUTORY BODIES, AND KNOWN TO BE POLITICALLY AMBITIOUS.

4. NANYANG REPORTS UNITED FRONT WILL CONTEST ANSON BY-ELECTION, BUT THAT BARISAN SOSIALIS LEADER LEE SIEW CHOH STATED THAT IF OTHER PARTIES FIELDED CANDIDATES BARISAN WOULD NOT. SIN CHEW ADDED THAT DR. LEE INDICATED BARISAN WOULD HELP OTHER OPPOSITION PARTIES IF IT DID NOT CONTEST BY-ELECTION ITSELF.

5. MOST CREDIBLE OPPOSITION PARTY, WORKERS PARTY, APPARENTLY HAS STILL NOT DECIDED WHETHER OR NOT TO CONTEST ELECTION. SEC GEN JEYARETNAM, WHO SAID AFTER LOSING MAY 1977 BY-ELECTION THAT WORKERS PARTY WOULD NOT ENTER BY-ELECTIONS AGAIN BECAUSE RULES UNFAIR, TOLD EMBOFF LAST WEEK THAT PARTY HAD NOT YET DECIDED WHETHER TO ENTER CONTEST. IN PRESS INTERVIEW JEYARETNAM MENTIONED NUMBERED BALLOTS AS UNFAIR, BUT IN DISCUSSION WITH EMBOFF SPOKE ONLY OF NINE-DAY CAMPAIGN PERIOD AND INTIMIDATING EFFECT ON VOTERS OF OPPOSITION CANDIDATES BEING FOLLOWED BY ISD MEN. (JEYARETNAM CLAIMS TO HAVE BEEN FOLLOWED PRIOR TO MAY 1977 BY-ELECTION.) JEYARETNAM TOLD EMBOFF THAT DECISION WAS DIFFICULT BECAUSE IF THEY DO PARTICIPATE, THEY CONTRIBUTE TO "FALSE PICTURE OF OPEN ELECTIONS," BUT IF THEY DO NOT, LEGITIMACY AS POLITICAL PARTY LOST.

6. COMMENT: DESPITE LOCAL INTEREST IN ELECTIONS AND WHO WILL CONTEST THEM, VICTORY OF PAP IS NOT IN QUESTION. JEYARETNAM LIMITED OFFICIAL USE

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ADMITTED THAT OPPOSITION PARTIES HAVE VIRTUALLY NO ORGANIZATION BETWEEN ELECTIONS, AND THIS MAIN REASON WHY NINE-DAY CAMPAIGN PERIOD SO LIMITING TO THEIR CHANCES. SINGAPORE'S VOTERS SUPPORT THE PAP BECAUSE OF THE MATERIAL BENEFITS ITS RULE HAS BROUGHT THEM, IN THE VIEW OF CRITICS AS WELL AS ENTHUSIASTS, WHATEVER THE LINGERING UNDERTONES OF PAST INTIMIDATION.  
INGRAHAM

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## Message Attributes

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**Channel Indicators:** n/a  
**Current Classification:** UNCLASSIFIED  
**Concepts:** BYELECTION  
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**Decaption Date:** 01 jan 1960  
**Decaption Note:**  
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**Disposition Approved on Date:**  
**Disposition Case Number:** n/a  
**Disposition Comment:** 25 YEAR REVIEW  
**Disposition Date:** 20 Mar 2014  
**Disposition Event:**  
**Disposition History:** n/a  
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**Enclosure:** n/a  
**Executive Order:** N/A  
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**Original Handling Restrictions:** n/a  
**Original Previous Classification:** n/a  
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**Review Markings:**  
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20 Mar 2014  
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